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Agencies Seek Input on First State-wide Program To Promote Regional Restoration of Natural Resources Injured by Oil Spills

BATON ROUGE, La. - Federal and state natural resource trustee officials will hold two public meetings on June 23, 2003 to solicit comments on a new Louisiana Regional Restoration Planning Program designed to restore natural resources injured by oil spills.

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, the U.S. Department of the Interior and the State of Louisiana are proposing the state-wide program to increase restoration of natural resources injured by oil spills. This type of program is especially important and appropriate for Louisiana since, between 1991 and 2000, 18% of the oil spills in the nation occurred in Louisiana.

The new program will expedite and reduce the cost of the natural resource damage assessment (NRDA) process—the framework by which trustee agencies assess and restore resources injured by oil spills. As part of the program, nine regional restoration plans will be developed. Each regional plan will identify existing, planned, or proposed restoration projects that may be used to address injured natural resources.

The trustees are requesting that all comments on the Louisiana Regional Restoration Planning Program/Draft

Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement (DPEIS), that was released on May 9, 2003, be submitted by July 9, 2003. Trustees have scheduled two public meetings on June 23, 2003, in Baton Rouge, LA, to receive comments. The daytime meeting will be held at 2 PM and the evening meeting at 6:30 PM. Both meetings will be held at the—

Conservation and Mineral Board Resources Hearing Room
1st floor-LaBelle Room
Louisiana Department of Natural Resources
LaSalle Office Building
617 N. 3rd Street
Baton Rouge, LA 70802

For more information about the Louisiana Regional Restoration Planning Program, or to submit comments on the DPEIS via fax, please contact William Conner (phone 301.713.3038 x190; fax 301-713-4287) or go online at www.darp.noaa.gov.

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